

1/30/22 Weekly Word Game

Chinese Loan Words

Estimated play time: Approximately 15 minutes

Number of players: Unlimited

Supplies needed: Scoring board/pad; noisemakers

Suitable for visually impaired players.

Overview:

The English language has adopted words and phrases from many other languages, such as *pajamas* from Hindi, *slob* from Irish, and *picnic* from French. In this game, we're marking Chinese New Year (the Year of the Tiger) by taking a look at words that the Chinese language has loaned to us. Note that some of the words have taken a bit of an indirect route from Chinese through other Sino-Tibetan languages, such as Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese; but all of them have Chinese roots and are now in common English use!

Instructions:

1. This game can be played by individuals or in teams.
2. Read the first definition. Discussion is permitted among teammates. Prior to the start of the game, a method to signal when a team is ready to answer must be determined. Ringing bells and New Year's blowers are just two inexpensive noisemakers. Raised hands work, but the host must be vigilant to watch for whose hand went up first. The host always has the final say in any disputes.
3. After a player/team is recognized as the first to signal, they may give an answer. If the first answer is incorrect, the other teams may "buzz" in and answer.
4. Scoring: Give 10 points for each correct answer.

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Instructions: All the answers in this quiz originated in the Chinese language and are now commonly used in English.

QUESTIONS

1. Adopted by the Marines in the early 1940s, this phrase has come to mean “unthinkingly enthusiastic and eager.”
2. Historically this term described the Chinese custom of kneeling and touching the ground with one’s forehead. It now means to behave in an excessively subservient manner.
3. This started as a card game in China. The cards became 144 tiles (sometimes made of ivory and decorated with Chinese characters and symbols) in the mid-19th century.
4. The name of this dish, made mostly of cabbage, bean sprouts, and mixed vegetables with a protein added in, translates literally as “mixed pieces or odds and ends.”
5. The literal translation of the word for this old-time form of Asian transportation is “human-powered vehicle.”
6. This style of Chinese cuisine is prepared in bite-sized pieces and is usually served as a weekend brunch. The literal translation from Cantonese is “touches the heart.”
7. Although we think of this as a Japanese quick-cooking noodle, its name originated in the Chinese language.
8. Some people think this soybean curd is an acquired taste.
9. This kitchen tool has two moveable “arms” that are joined at one end and are used for picking up and holding things.
10. This is what a cyclone or hurricane is called in most of Asia.
11. This bowl-shaped frying pan is typically and frequently used in Chinese cooking.
12. The word for this bite-sized dumpling often served in soup translates as “cloud swallow,” which probably refers to its shape.
13. The name of this popular Chinese cabbage literally translates as “white vegetable.”
14. Today, this is a tomato sauce; but when English explorers came upon it in 18th century-China, it was a condiment made of pickled fish and spices.
15. English speakers use this word to describe a craving or longing; but in Chinese it originally meant “addiction,” most likely to opium. (Hint: It is also the name of Japanese currency.)
16. This word travelled from Chinese to Japanese to English, in which it means a very wealthy businessman.

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ANSWERS

1. Gung Ho
2. Kowtow
3. Mahjong
4. Chop Suey. (*Note: Chop suey and chow mein are often confused. However, chow mein always has noodles, and chop suey does not.*)
5. Rickshaw
6. Dim Sum
7. Ramen
8. Tofu
9. Tongs
10. Typhoon
11. Wok
12. Wonton
13. Bok Choy
14. Ketchup
15. Yen
16. Tycoon